



## Feinstein Announces Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act Signed into Law

November 27, 2006

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced that President Bush today signed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) into law. The new law enhances the ability of the U.S. Department of Justice to prosecute animal rights extremists who utilize violence and terroristic threats, while expressly preserving the First Amendment rights of activists to peacefully protest and boycott lawfully.

**“Scientific research is not only a legitimate career, but also an invaluable facet of medical advancement, conducted by respectable professionals deserving of our support,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“The deplorable actions by some extremists have threatened to impede important medical progress toward lifesaving cures and medical innovation.”**

**“The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act addresses the changing tactics of these extremists and provides law enforcement officials with the tools necessary to protect our nation’s researchers more effectively.”**

Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.), Chairman of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee, co-sponsored the legislation in the Senate. The legislation passed the Senate on September 29, 2006, and passed the House on November 13.

The legislation was drafted with technical assistance from counter-terror experts at the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### **Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act**

The AETA gives needed protection to scientists, medical researchers, ranchers, farmers, and any other industry involving animals by expanding current law to address violent tactics used by animal rights extremists to frighten law abiding citizens away from their work.

Specifically, the law:

- Clarifies that it is a crime to intentionally damage or interfere with an “animal enterprise” – which includes legitimate commercial and academic institutions that may use animals for education, research or testing;

- Expands federal law to also make it illegal to intentionally harm or cause property loss to anyone connected with an animal enterprise;
- Criminalizes threats, harassment, and other illegal activity that uses interstate commerce to intentionally cause fear of death or injury to anyone connected with an animal enterprise;
- Establishes graded penalties of up to life imprisonment, depending on the financial damage or level of bodily injury caused by such illegal conduct;
- Establishes that a convicted animal enterprise terrorist can also be ordered as restitution to pay the animal enterprise's cost of repeating experiments and other losses resulting from the criminal conduct; and
- Clarifies that all legitimate protest activities protected by the First Amendment are exempted from any prosecution under the bill.

**“This legislation confronts these threats in a manner that gives due protections under the First Amendment,” Senator Feinstein said. “Peaceful picketing and public demonstrations against animal are a part of valuable free expression. This law effectively protects the actions of the law-abiding protestor while carefully distinguishing the criminal activity of extremists.”**

### **Additional California Background**

Universities and research facilities across California have been impacted by animal rights extremists. Between 2001 and 2005, faculty and staff at the University of California San Francisco engaged in animal research, or the care of animals used in research, were targeted by a number of activist groups. Among other incidents, faculty and staff received threatening phone calls and messages, harassing visits to their homes, death threats, and in one instance, a burning effigy was left on a researcher's doorstep. The University has been forced to spend more than \$2.5 million to increase security at its research facilities.

In June 2006, extremist activists acting in the name of animal rights attempted to firebomb the home of a UCLA primate researcher. The home where they placed their bomb actually belonged to a 70-year-old neighbor of the scientist. The device did not ignite, but it did lead another prominent UCLA researcher to quit in fear.

In August 2003, two bombs were placed at the Emeryville offices of Chiron Corporation, a pharmaceutical company in the Bay area that employs 4,400 employees as our nation's 2nd largest manufacturer of flu vaccines.

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